

## **International Reading Association [IRA] Guidelines for RTI**

Whatever approach is taken to RTI, it should ensure optimal instruction for every student at all levels of schooling. It should prevent serious language and literacy problems through increasingly differentiated and intensified assessment and instruction. It should reduce the disproportionate number of minority youth and ELLs indentified as learning disabled.

Instruction and assessment conducted by the classroom teacher is central to the success of RTI and must address the needs of all students, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Evidence shows that effective classroom instruction can reduce substantially the number of students who are inappropriately classified as learning disabled.

A successful RTI process begins with the highest quality, core instruction in the classroom-that is, instruction that encompasses all areas of language and literacy as part of a coherent curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for PreK-12 students, and that does not underestimate their potential for learning. This core instruction may or may not involve commercial programs, and it must in all cases be provided by an informed, classroom teacher.

The success of RTI depends on the classroom teacher's use of research-based practices. As defined by IRA (2002), research based means, "that a particular program or collection of instructional practices has a record of success." That is, there is reliable, trustworthy, and valid evidence to suggest that when the program is used with a particular group of children, the children can be expected to make adequate gains in reading achievement.

Research on instructional practices must provide not only information about what works, but also what works with whom, by whom, in what contexts, and on which outcomes. The effectiveness of a particular practice needs to have been demonstrated with the types of students who will receive the instruction, taking into account, for example, whether the student lives in rural or urban settings or comes from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Research evidence frequently represents the effectiveness of instructional practice on average, which suggests that some students benefitted and others did not. This means that a teacher who understands the intent of the research-based practice being used, and has the professional expertise and responsibility to plan instruction and adapt materials as needed, must provide the instruction.

When core language and literacy instruction is not effective for a particular student, it should be modified to address more closely the needs and abilities of that student. Classroom teachers, at times, in collaboration with other experts, must exercise their best professional judgment in providing responsive teaching and differentiation.